

THE

QL

MAGAZINE

Volume 31 Issue 2: APR-MAY

Is the QL coming home to roost?



QUANTA
QL USERS & TINKERS ASSOCIATION

QUANTA

INFORMATION ON THE ASSOCIATION

Membership of QUANTA, the independent QL user group, is by annual subscription. The Membership Secretary can supply full details. Copies of the association's constitution & annual accounts are available from the Secretary.

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	LEE PRIVETT	4
QUANTA NEWS	DILWYN JONES	5
QUO VADIS DESIGN	ADVERTISEMENT	8
RWAP SOFTWARE	ADVERTISEMENT	16
JOCHEN MERZ SOFTWARE .	ADVERTISEMENT	22
SANDY ELECTRONICS	ADVERTISEMENT	32
ACCURATE LOOPING II	GEORGE GWILT	39
RWAP MEMBRANES	ADVERTISEMENT	40
QL-SD INITIAL THOUGHTS ..	PETER SCOTT	44
SANDY ELECTRONICS PT1 ..	DAVE PARK	49
COPY DATE	(FOR NEXT ISSUE)	51
QL FORUM	ADVERTISEMENT.....	52

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Currently watching this video? <http://>

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCKercQxHrk

I sympathise with everyone who has or is going through the process of moving house. Having had what I consider to be a lengthy process of moving (it has taken me around a total of 7 months now), I had expected to move in January, however I finally moved in April. I was already 3/4 packed and all hobby based equipment, including all QL & Spectrum based systems safely packed away in boxes, even recently purchased items not used or opened.

Error! I didn't label the boxes thoroughly with the contents, reverting to 'stuff', 'more stuff' or one item and 'an expletive'. This follows my sense of humour especially recently where a xmas gift to see the 'Curry Club' with my future intended, a local venue where you get to sit down to a curry buffet and a couple of stand up comedians. The 'headline act' was someone I had seen on TV and his opening gambit was about the youth of today and the meaningless drivel they speak. He stated "There is no positive sentence or phrase that can end with the word 'Sh!t'" and proceeded to state things like "Last week, I went to see my Sister and Sh!t". Of course in comedy, once the point has been made every thing that follows was funny, at least it appealed to us.

The following few days after we had been given a completion date meant more frantic packing and labelling the boxes, still thinking of the enjoyable evening I took to writing on them "cutlery & Sh!t", "bathroom stuff and Sh!t" you get the picture, perhaps also hoping it would entertain the movers. Once moved however, I cant find anything, half the boxes are still sealed in storage so to speak and I have a deadline to finish for this magazine. So where is all my QL stuff and Sh!t?

The Editor

If you have QL-related news items that you'd like us to include on this page, please get in touch with News Editor - Dilwyn Jones at news@quanta.org.uk

It has been another very busy month for QL news, so here goes...

SMSQmulator Update

Wolfgang Lenerz has announced that version 1.27 of the Java-based emulator is available to download free from his website at <http://www.wlenerz.com/SMSQmulator/>

It now is possible to configure it so that it doesn't use much CPU time when the machine is idle. Changes to this only take effect after the next reset.

Please read the manual section in this respect.

Other recent updates to the emulator include:

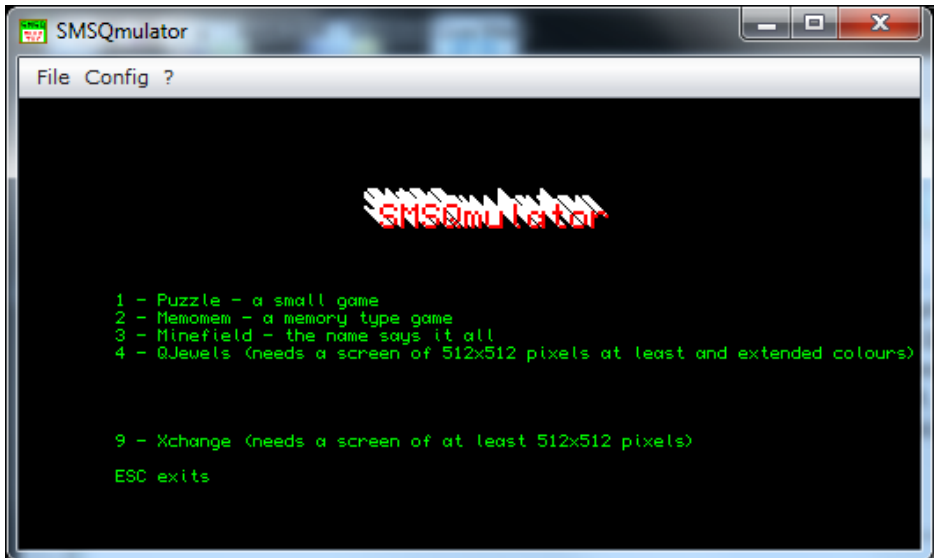
Aurora compatible screen mode.

SHIFT ESC now makes a copyright symbol.

MEM device for using QXL.WIN from RAM when SMSQmulator is run as an embedded applet from a website.

Millisecond timer using Java keywords JTMRSET and JTMRGET.

Sound device added in v1.23, meaning you can now use _ub (unsigned byte) sound files merely by COPYing them to the SOUND device, e.g. COPY test_ub TO SOUND. The SOUND device is largely compatible with Simon Goodwin's SOUND driver for other systems.



Screen shot of the menu for the sample programs supplied with SMSQmulator

SMSQ/E v3.20

Wolfgang Lernerz has also announced that version 3.20 of SMSQ/E is now out. This is mainly a bug fix release, curing a problem which might arise when trying to write to a read-only file if a single byte is sent to a DV3 channel. It also adds (to SMSQmulator only) a Java-based timer function (see above).

Other recent changes have included the integration of QPC-specific code, a facility to have different text sizes (different CSIZES) in application windows, window move with transparency facility and the code base now includes the Gold Card drivers for the 256 colour (Aurora-style) colour mode, which is now available in QPC2 and SMSQmulator in addition to Aurora with Super Gold Card.

The binaries of all official versions of SMSQ/E (Gold Card, Q40, QPC, QXL, Atari and SMSQmulator) can be downloaded from the SMSQ/E Registrar's site at <http://www.wlernerz.com/smsqe/>

The QemuLator versions of SMSQ/E are not integrated with the general SMSQ/E versions – two versions (which are a few versions behind what is available from Wolfgang’s site) are available for use with QemuLator’s Aurora and Q60 compatible ‘display card’ modes only from Daniele Terdina’s website at :

<http://www.terdina.net/ql/software.html>

SMSQ/E Manual

A new version of the complete SMSQ/E manual is now available. I have been fortunate to have the original Text 87 files from Jochen Merz, who kindly gave me permission to make use of them to produce and release the new version of the manuals.

What I wanted to do was to bring them up to date, as the paper copies I had were from some time ago. Even the documents I got from Jochen did not include mention of some of the more recent keywords and facilities added to SMSQ/E, for example, there was little or no mention of the Home Thing facility.

Fortunately, the SMSQ/E Registrar Wolfgang Lenerz has ensured that some documentation updates were available in the SMSQ/E source files which could be downloaded from his website at :

<http://www.wlenerz.com/smsqe/> so between those notes and looking at the sources I was able to enhance and update the manual. This version is an all-in-one manual. It includes the supplements for the various hardware platforms (QL, QXL, QPC, Q40/Q60 and Atari emulator, though not yet SMSQmulator). The hope is that the SMSQ/E Registrar can make this manual available via his SMSQ/E site to ensure it’s kept up to date as SMSQ/E evolves in the future.

The 108 A4 page manual (and an A5 version) is available to download in PDF, ePub, Mobi and azw3 (Kindle) eBook formats from my QL eBooks page at:

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/ebooks/index.html>

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Welcome

Quo Vadis Design sells software for the Socratic Quantum Leap computer (QL) and variants including a new OS called SMSQ/E.

The QL is a computer in its 25th year Anniversary.

News

- QVD QL News Blog - keep up to date
[News Blog](#)
24/04/2009
- Quo Vadis Design Website Launched
01/02/2009

FEATURED PRODUCT



BUY NOW!

Software emulations of the QL now exist which can run on a PC/Mac with Windows/E Mac Operating systems.

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**QPC2 IS NOW FREE AND
AVAILABLE FROM MARCEL
KILGUS WEBSITE**

<http://www.kilgus.net/qpc/index.html>

**Congratulations to Marcel
on becoming a Father**

**Check the QL News Blog on
our website for updates.
www.ql-qvd.com/blog**

QL Games Cartridge

The original QL games cartridge supplied with the QL has been available from the Games page on my website for a while now. It includes the games Pirate, Zfred, Gun, Breakout and Hunt (Treasure Hunt).

Sadly, it turns out it was partly broken all along. If you downloaded this before 27th March 2014 you may find it does not work due to a missing file called 'mc' which caused the Breakout game to fail, so you should download the amended version now on the website.

Thanks to Rich Mellor, the problem areas have now been rectified and/or improved. This now needs Toolkit II to get the Zfred game to work on more than a standard 128K RAM QL. Rich has also added a MODE 8 command at the start of the Treasure Hunt game to improve the look of the display when it is first run and supplied the 'mc' file which was missing from the earlier version.

I've also added a scanned PDF of the original 2-page instructions letter sent out by Sinclair with the QL Games Cartridge.

Download both from the Games page on my website:

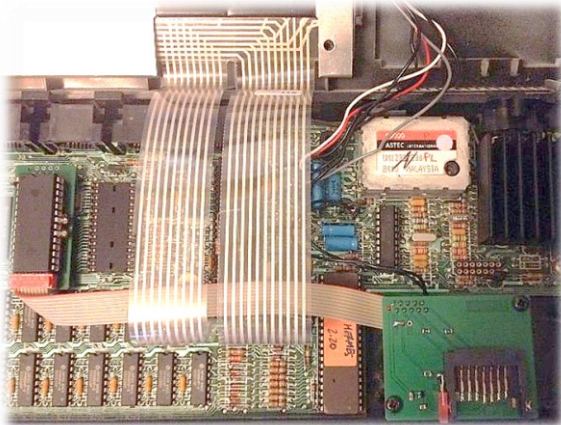
<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/index.html>

QL-SD Page

Now that QL-SD is available via SellMyRetro.com, albeit in small numbers so far, I've set up a page where you can download the manual, software starter pack and the BDI (Block Device Image) specification for emulators, thanks to Peter Graf for supplying the software and documents. I hope that as QL-SD becomes more widely available and used, this page can act as a source and repository for documents and files relating to the QL-SD

The page is at <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/qlsd/index.html>

Also, thanks to Graeme Gregory, a version of qltools has been developed specifically for use with the HxC floppy disk emulator. This is available from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/files/index.html>



Picture by Peter Scott of QL Forum.

A QL-SD installed in the MDV1_ slot on a QL, above. The two circuit boards are the ones on the left of the picture connected to the one at the bottom right of the picture via the ribbon cable. The picture below shows the finished product – all you see is the SDHC card protruding from the MDV1_ slot of Peter’s albino QL.



Picture by Peter Scott of QL Forum.

And while on the subject of QL-SD, most people choose to install one QL-SD, usually in the MDV2_ slot, leaving MDV1 free to work as a Microdrive. For those who would like two QL-SD per QL (e.g. backup?), Paul Veltjens who builds these devices has confirmed it's possible to install a second SDHC adaptor as device name SDC2_. Paul says he then needs to set a jumper differently and a cable with three connectors, one for your QLROMEXT and two for the two sd card interfaces.

No price set for this yet, so if you require such a setup, please ask Paul via QL Forum.

QL Forum – Live Chat

The new Live Online Chat has proven fairly popular so far, with members online most nights now, although only a relatively small number of the 227 QL Forum members use the facility at any one time. It tends to be a mix of the QL news of the moment, general chat, helping each other out with problems, discussing what we're all up to at the time and so on, quite interesting getting to chat to other QL users in real time occasionally. For example, Dave Park of Sandy Electronics is on there several nights a week – this would be a good chance to chat to him and ask him about the exciting QL products he plans for release this year, including those already available such as the Gold Card replacement batteries, Minerva, Microdrive felt pads and Mplane.

It was while on there one evening that I found out about his plans for the low cost SuperRAM, an 896K RAM card, designed for users with QL-SD (which works better with expanded RAM, although it can work on a 128K system) and older disk interfaces with no RAM expansion.

To join in the Online Chat, we are on most evenings at around 9pm UK time. You have to be a QL Forum member (signing up is free of course). Once signed into the Forum, you will see a link above, called

'Online Chat' (This sits next to the 'User Control Panel'). You can also connect via an IRC (Internet Relay Chat) client of your choice, using the following settings;

IRC Server: chat.qlforum.co.uk

Port: 6667

Channel Name: #qlforum

The Simulator – Ekotek

We have received permission from Robert Stekelenburg (who owned Ekotek) to make The Simulator, a flight simulator program for the QL, freeware. We have preserved a copy which runs as a disk image in q-emulator - there is currently copy protection on this, which reduces how many copies can be made onto real disks, but at least it does allow stand-alone disk copies to be made.

Robert is going to see if he still has sources so we can see if we can try to get the copy protection removed, but at least it's available and usable now. Detlef Obermann has put in a lot of work to make this program usable, with assistance from Tobias Fröschle. For example, the program can now be switched between MODE 8 and MODE 4.



Screen shot from The Simulator by Ekotek

Ian Burkinshaw has reproduced a manual and the maps and crib sheets as PDF files, available to download as PDF files alongside the program itself from the Games page on my website at <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/index.html>

Turbo Compiler And Toolkit Updated

George Gwilt writes:

New versions of some programs are now available on my website <http://gwiltprogs.info>

1. **TURBO v5.0** allows access to its Channel Table. This table consists of a set of 32 40-byte entries one for each of the possible channels in a program compiled by TURBO. The first long word contains the ID of the QDOS channel, or -1 if none is open. The rest of the entry contains information about graphics for CON or SCR channels.

TURBO_CH(#N) returns the absolute address of the entry for channel N. N can be either an explicit number (between 0 and 31) or a variable containing the number.

2. **TURBO_TK CODE v3.43** now contains the keyword TURBO_CH which, if used in S*BASIC, returns 1.

3. **NET_PEEK v3.42**, already issued, displays the contents of the channel table for CON/SCR channels in programs compiled by TURBO. The latest version, v3.43, now copes with programs compiled by TURBO v5.08.

QL Is 30-Edinburgh?

Geoff Wicks and QL users in Scotland have started looking at the possibilities of an event to be held in Edinburgh later this year. On 28th March, Geoff Wicks wrote:

"I am pleased to report there is a glimmer of hope for QLis30.

“At the moment we are looking at the possibility of an event in Edinburgh, although the discussions are provisional.

“We are thinking of a late Autumn one day event, preferably on a Saturday, at a venue near the airport.

“A one day event is easier to get off the ground than a two day event for both financial and practical reasons with a greater choice of venues. One venue being considered is a church hall unavailable Sunday a.m.

“It would be possible to have some activity such as a meal on the Friday. Some of you will remember the last show held in Portslade in 2007. The hall was booked for one day but we had a very successful dinner the night before at an unusual Belgian restaurant.

“When the possibility of an event in Edinburgh was first raised some weeks ago several German QL-ers, very active in the QL-community, expressed an interest. We would like to get a group of developers and other highly active QL-ers together for both formal and informal contacts. We want a good cross fertilisation of ideas to hopefully give the QL a push forward.

“I have agreed to work on the theme, programme and content, but will need quite a bit of feedback.”

Since that email, a lot of discussion has taken place, with attempts to get what some have called “the movers and shakers of the QL community” to attend, either in person or electronically via Skype or tele-conferencing (it has been said that two of the four venues under consideration have a wi-fi system, for example). Peter Graf has already expressed an interest in attending (Peter is the designer of QL products such as the QL-SD and a possible future QL-compatible board called Q68 which already exists, but some work is required to debug the emulated 68000 core instruction set).

Geoff noted that “One advantage of Edinburgh is that it is an interesting city and some may wish to extend their stay for a short holiday. There would also be plenty for partners to see elsewhere in the city when we are busy QL-ing.”

A little while back, when QL Is 30 was first mooted, attempts were made to “crowd source” funding for such an event and pledges totalling close to £1000 were made, which would go some way towards financing such an event.

Something else which has got the 30th year of the QL moving is a meeting of German QL users in Mahlerts in early April. Unfortunately, we didn't get information about this event in time to publicise it through this magazine. It was the annual meeting of the German ZX-Team, who had decided that as it was the 30th anniversary of the QL, they would dedicate part of the meeting to the QL. On QL Forum, Paul Veltjens described it as “less gaming together, but more hardware related as repairs are made and development is discussed and presented. It is dedicated to all Sinclair products. Mk14,ZX80, ZX81, spectrums of all kinds, QL, Z88, C5 and all sorts of clones are expected every year.”

If you have comments to make on the proposed event in Edinburgh, please get in touch with John Sadler or Geoff Wicks

jms1@supanet.com or gtwicks@btinternet.com

Squidgy Update

Having found that the Squidgy Around The World game would not run on some QL systems with the PLACExx files in drive 2 as recommended, Detlef Obermann sent me a version altered to run entirely from a single drive system, FLP1_.

Detlef also notes that “it's not possible to run the Squidgy game as a mounted ZIP under Q-emulator. You need to expand it to a real

RWAP Software

We have been working hard to safeguard the future of the Sinclair QL through creating an online QL Wiki backed by a repository of QL titles.

The QL Wiki enables people to see what software and hardware was produced for the Sinclair QL. The repository enables people to purchase working copies when their microdrive cartridges fail, or they move onto disks or emulators. Where we can, we obtain permission from the copyright holders to re-release items on the market.

This has enabled us to bring some of the titles back to the market as well as re-ignite interest in the Sinclair QL and its emulators.

Old favourites brought back to life include:

E.V.A., Vroom
Black Knight, Double Block
Jungle Eddi, The Lost Pharaoh
Pangi, the Lonely Joker
Microdeal's Flight Simulator, QL Hopper, The King,
Night Nurse and Cuthbert in Space
Mortville Manor, Darkside of the Moon (£10)

We still retain our existing catalogue, including:

Open Golf, Return to Eden,
Stone Raider II, The Prawn,
Hoverzone, Lost Kingdom of Zkul,
Deathstrike, Horrorday,
Flightdeck and QWord

All games are available on disk or for use with Q-emuLator on the PC **from ONLY £5 each**

Microdrive versions also available - from £10 each.
Memory / system limits may apply - please check before ordering.

Visit the QL Wiki for more details on software, books and hardware for the Sinclair QL:

www.rwapadventures.com/ql_wiki

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Website:
www.rwapsoftware.co.uk or www.sellmyretro.com



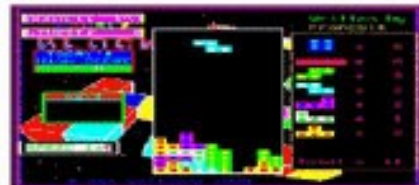
Vroom by Pyramide



E.V.A by Westwey



Mortville Manor by Pyramide



Double Block by Francois Lancaut

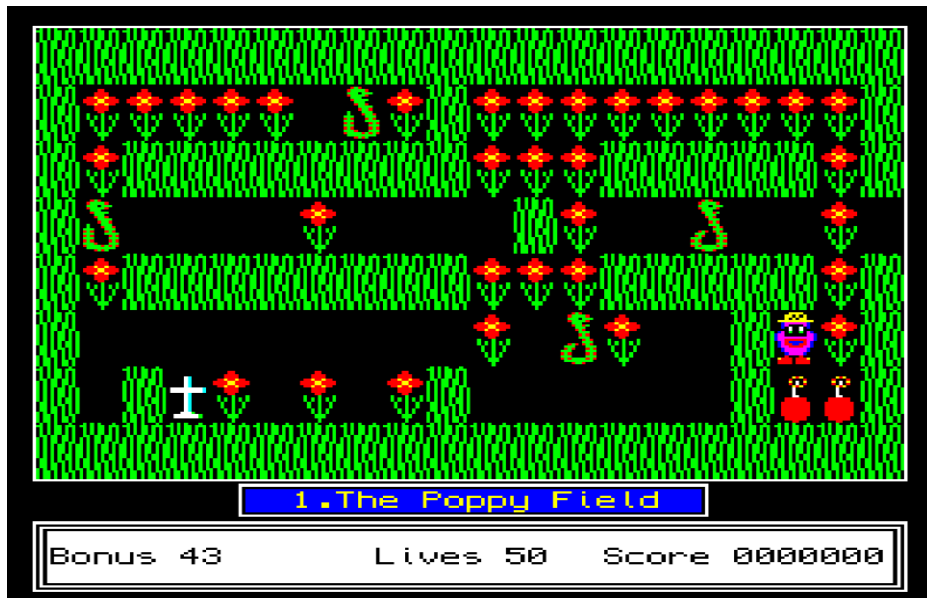


Night Nurse by Microdeal

folder, independent of whether it's on an emulator or on a Black Box QL". We think that's caused by the write protection, the program tries to write highscore files, which would not be possible to a zipped file attached to a QemuLator drive slot.

Download the updated version of Squidgy from :

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/index.html>



Squidgy, in the poppy field.

FDI and MDI Drivers

Martin Head has now made available an FDI (floppy disk image) driver utility to go with the MDI (Microdrive image) driver. Here are the descriptions from my website:

MDI Driver (279K download) - a device driver for emulating the Microdrive cartridges as used in the Sinclair QL, as a file stored on another device. Specifically developed for use with QPC2, but should

work with most emulators. Since QL compatible systems generally have no Microdrives, this lets you use saved Microdrive images on emulators. Includes images of Quill, Archive, Abacus and Easel. To create your own images of Microdrives, you will need a real QL with working Microdrives and read the text file "Creating_Images_txt" supplied to see which program to use and how to go about it.

Apparently even Microdrive 'random number' finger prints are copied, allowing even some protected older programs to be run! The driver lets you load and save from/to these Microdrive images.

FDI Driver (330K download) - for running floppy disk images on QL systems and emulators. Works on level 1 DSDD 720k and DSSD 360k disk images (no support for HD or ED disks and no support for level 2 directories) to allow simple straightforward copies of disk software to be run. It includes a program written in BASIC to make the raw images on a QDOS system with a floppy drive, or you can use 'raw' disk images created with software such as EMT4WIN for Windows, plus a program to make ('format') blank disk images, sample blank 360K and 720K disk images, plus a demo image of Xchange. Download from : <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/utills/index.html>

Superbasic Syntax rules for Textpad

If anyone has the Textpad editor for Windows and would like to use it to edit QL SuperBASIC programs (with user definable syntax colouring etc) I've added a copy of SuperBasic.syn from Laurence Reeves (author of Minerva) to my website. There is a link to it from Laurence's website at <http://www.bergbland.info> but it's a broken link, however, luckily I had saved a copy of it some time ago which happens to still be on my PC.

To use it, unzip the superbasic_syn.zip and place the file called superbasic.syn in your "Program Files" for TextPad, inside the

"Samples" folder. Textpad can be downloaded from

<http://www.textpad.com>

Download it from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/basic/index.html> (near the bottom of the page with the other syntax rules systems).

There's also a set of 'syntax' files for use with BBEEdit, TextWrangler and VIM editors for those who may prefer or may be more used to editing programs in editors on other operating systems which make use of configurable syntax highlighting. Of course, here on the QL, you could do worse than using the Thierry Godefroy port of microEmacs which also has syntax highlighting, available to download from : <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/editview/index.html> or from Thierry's site at <http://morloch.hd.free.fr/smsg/#DESK>

QPC1 Now Freeware

Following the free release of version 4 of QPC2, its author Marcel Kilgus has also decided to make available the full version of its DOS counterpart, QPC1. While QPC1 doesn't have modern facilities like GD2 high colour modes, it is nonetheless a perfectly good SMSQ/E based QL emulator for DOS and very early Windows systems. It might be possible to breathe new life into an old and otherwise redundant PC by, for example, putting FreeDOS on it (www.freedos.org) just to run QPC1.

Writing on 25th February to confirm the release, Marcel said:

"Due to popular demand, the full version of QPC1 has now been released, too. It's available from my web site and works amazingly well under the DosBox emulator. Fun fact: the QPC1 boot screen was modelled after my favourite game at the time: Doom." Download QPC1 and a plain text English manual from Marcel's website at <http://www.kilgus.net/qpc/downloads.html> - it's under 'Obsolete stuff' near the bottom of the page!

QPC1 and Dos Box on Linux

This article has been reproduced from QL Forum, with the permission of the author, Timothy Swenson

QPC1 and DosBox

Since I've migrated to Linux for my desktop system, my selection of QL emulators is not very big. The best and my favourite is SMSQmulator. It is fairly powerful, but it has limitations in that it is not a QL emulator but a platform for SMSQ/E. This means that very early programs that only run on a QL, will not run on it.

QPC1 has recently been released and that looks to be another option for me. I've heard that some programs that will not run on SMSQmulator, might run better under QPC1. QPC1 is only for DOS, which leaves a bit of a quandary for a Linux user. Luckily, there is DosBox, which creates a DOS environment, perfect for running QPC1.

DosBox is primarily designed for running old DOS games from the early to mid 1990's, but I've used it to run the DOS version of the PSION programs with no issues. DosBox runs on a number of platforms, including Windows, Linux and Mac. It does a good job of providing a DOS environment for running a number of DOS utilities. DosBox is freely available from <http://www.dosbox.com>. Download the specific version for your operating system and install it using the directions from the DosBox website.

I will assume that you know where to find QPC1 and be able to download it. (*see above – News Ed.*)

Configuring DosBox for QPC1

To get QPC1 to run on DosBox, three settings have to change. Open the DosBox config (dosbox.conf) file using a text editor. See the

DosBox documentation to find out where your version is located. For Linux, the config file is in the .dosbox directory. Find the EMX, XMS and UMB section of the file and set the following:

```
xms=false  
ems=false  
umb=false
```

Setting up DosBox

DosBox can read the underlying file system of the operation system, and can run DOS executables from that file system. It is recommended to create a DOS directory and then place all DOS files in sub directories under this directory. This will keep all of your DOS files in one location. One thing to remember, once DosBox is started, do not edit the DOS directory with the file system tools. DosBox will not notice any changes until it is restarted again.

When DosBox is started, it will give a Z: drive as the local directory. You can mount the DOS directory from the local file system like this:

```
mount c c:\dos- Windows  
mount c /home/user/dos- Linux  
c:- Move to C:\
```

Instead of doing this every time you fire up DosBox, you can add it to the autoexec part of the DosBox config file. Look for [autoexec] in the config file and add the above statements just after it. These commands will be run each time DosBox is started.

Starting QPC1

Once DosBox is started, just CD to the directory where QPC1 is located. For the first time running QPC1, you will need to run the program "config" and set things like the keyboard and what

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**Thanks to Marcel, QPC2 is now freely available.
You can download it from Marcells homepage**

www.Kilgus.net

If you wish to print from QPC2, then you need

QPCPrint

... which is available from J-M-S.

Only 39.90 if you choose EMail delivery.

For additional 4 EUR, delivery will be on CD.

QPCPrint will allow you to print to (more or less) every printer which is installed under Windows (dot matrix, ink, laser, PDF "printer", FAX "printer" etc.)

You can place your order via letter or use the SSL order form on SMSQ.J-M-S.COM - click on "Online orders".

If you order by Mail or through the SSL contact form: We now accept VISA, MasterCard, Diners Club, JCB, Discover, UnionPay, BCard, DinaCard and American Express!

The order form has not been updated for the new card types at the time I write this ad, but it will be updated soon.

I am still working on changing the forms and implementing SEPA on all the order forms.

QXL.WIN files to use. Once that is done, execute 'qpce' for English or 'qpcd' for German.

Hints with DosBox

Mouse

By default the mouse is trapped by DosBox, not allowing it to leave the DosBox window. The mouse can be untrapped by hitting CTRL-F10. To turn this feature off, set "autolock=false" in the DosBox config file.

Larger Resolution

DosBox allows for higher resolution than VGA. QPC1 also allows for higher resolution. DosBox and QPC1 has been successfully tested with a resolution of 1024x512. See the DosBox and QPC1 documentation on how to change the resolution on each.

Full Screen

DosBox can be set to full screen by using hitting ALT-ENTER. Hitting this again, will turn off full screen. If using QPC1 in 512x256 mode, going full screen will enlarge all of the text making it easier to see and provide for a more "normal" QL experience.

Exit from QPC1

For those that don't remember, exiting from QPC1 back to DosBox can be done by the QPC_EXIT command. DosBox can be exited by clicking on the (X) close box while QPC1 is running, but quitting from QPC1 is probably more graceful. Once back at the DOS prompt, 'exit' will exit DosBox.

Floppy Access

DosBox does not support low level access to floppy disks, even if they are attached, so don't expect to use floppy drives, even though QPC1 can directly access floppies.

Printer Access

DosBox does not support printers or the printer (LPT) port, which means that even if you used software that captures data to the LPT port and sends it to a file, it will still fail. There is a special build, call Hal9000, of DoxBos that is reported to support the printer port.

DOS Access

QPC1 does not have the DOS1_ device that QPC2 has. There is no way for QPC1 to access files stored under the underlying file system. This also means that there is no built-in way to transfer files from DOS to a QXL.win file and back. Jonathan Hudson's qxltools is the best option. There is a front-end called wqxt2, but it is only pre-compiled binary for Windows.

Jean-Yves Rouffiac added, for Mac OS X users: the location of the config file is:

```
~/Library/Preferences/DOSBox\ 0.74\ Preferences
```

(Change the version number to the one matching your version of DOSBox)

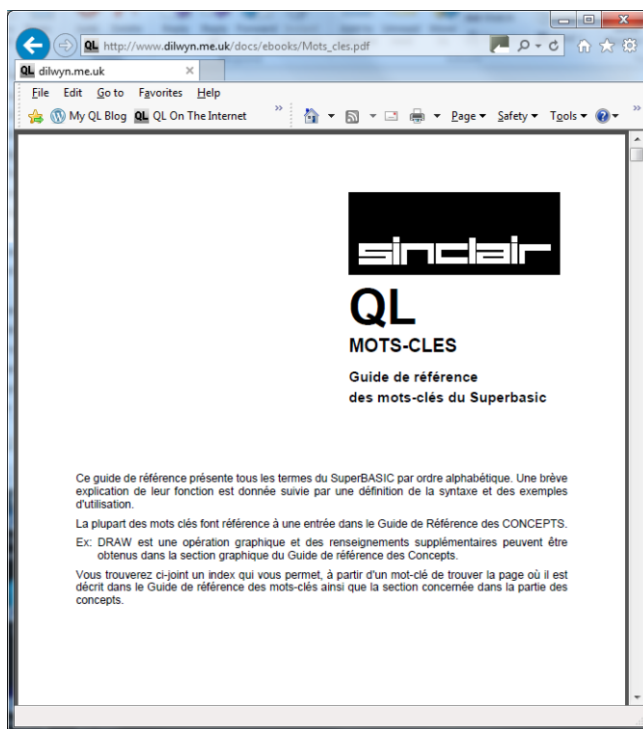
French QL User Guide

Olivier Basely has embarked upon the task of scanning the French language version of the QL User Guide and collecting the French versions of the QL's Psion software – Quill, Abacus, Archive and

Easel (at the time of writing, we did not yet have Abacus). The packages are available from

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/psions/index.html>

The manual currently consists of the Introduction, Guide Débutant (Beginners Guide), Mots Cles (Keywords guide) and the Archive Guide. All four are available as Word .docx and PDF files on the eBooks page at <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/ebooks/index.html>



Screen shot of the French QL User Guide

Toolkit 2 Guide

Stephen Usher has been working on the Toolkit 2 manual. He says:

I've been working on getting the original Toolkit II manual into a more modern format which is actually usable.

You should be able to download them from:

<http://www.lingula.org.uk/~steve/share/ToolKit-II-Manual.pdf>

and

<http://www.lingula.org.uk/~steve/share/ToolKit-II-Manual.doc>

There's still a lot of formatting to correct but it's a heck of a lot more readable than the original. In fact, if anyone is willing to help him continue this work, please contact him at steve@lingula.org.uk

OS X Floppy Disk Access

In recent versions of the OS X operating system, Apple changed the permissions and only *root* can now access floppy disks at the low level necessary to be able to read non-Mac and non-PC disks. This change may have closed a potential security hole, but it also means that emulators are no longer able to access floppy disks without the root user authorizing the access at some point.

Daniele Terdina, author of Q-emuLator, has posted a blog showing how to work around this limitation for users of a QL emulator on a Mac. Have a look at his blog posting at <http://qemulator.blogspot.co.uk/> and look for the posting entitled 'OS X Floppy Disk Access', posted on Wednesday 26th February.



Screen shot of the Q-Emulator blog

OOPS! - SYNCHRONISE PROGRAM AMENDMENT

The Synchronising program in the Dec 13/Jan 14 issue of QUANTA magazine needs a minor correction. While it works, it uses a DJToolkit extension called GET_LONG in line 480 so requires use of DJToolkit as it stands.

However, if you don't have DJToolkit installed, this is easily changed to use a common Toolkit 2 extension instead. Simply change line 480 to use the GET command from Toolkit 2 instead:

```
480 BGET #ch\fp+38 :GET #ch,updt1
```

UNARJ Update

UNARJ is an update (v2.65) of the UNARJ decompressor for the QL, by Derek Stewart. Download it from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/arch/index.html> (62K download)

Home Finance

You should be able to work out what this program is from the title! It's a former commercial title from many years ago from Buzz Software, now available free of charge. Both 128K RAM and expanded memory versions supplied, although it's possible the expanded memory version may ironically not work too well on anything larger than Trump Card-sized memory (i.e. more than 1MB, e.g. Gold Card). Extensive Quill _doc file manuals.

Download it from

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/business/index.html> (100K download)

QATS

QATS, otherwise known as the QL Application Traffic Supervisor, is a formerly commercial program from Gordon Henson at Cope, which was made shareware. It's a utility designed to reduce the number of keystrokes needed to perform housekeeping and task control on your QL.

QATS is menu driven, and the menus can be tailored to your QL setup and way of working to maximise your productivity. Includes facilities for controlling the Psion programs and other executables, swoppers and Basic programs, wildcard filename processing file and job management facilities. Works best with JS or Minerva QL ROMs, some facilities may not work on earlier ROM versions.

Several Quill _doc files included, and a scanned PDF original manual also available. Download from

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/utills/index.html> (139K download)

Colossal Cave

The first ever "interactive fiction" adventure game, Colossal Cave by William Crowther, is available for the QL. Tobias Fröschle obtained the sources from <http://www.ifarchive.org/if-archive/games/source/> and ported it to the QL.

Here's the description from my website:

Colossal Cave - originally produced in the 1970s, it was the historic first "interactive fiction" game where you type in what to do next in simple English in a computer presented scenario. Originally written by William Crowther in 1975, enhanced in 1976 by Don Woods and ported to many computer systems since, it has now been ported to the QL by Tobias Fröschle. Play the role of someone exploring the Colossal Cave system in Kentucky, but beware, although there are rumours of gold and treasure, magic is afoot - you are in a twisty maze of passageways (all alike!)

See the README_TXT file after downloading and unpacking the zip file for instructions - basically, point DATA_USE and PROG_USE to the directory containing the program files and execute the ADVENT_EXE program. (51K download)

It is now available from the Games page on my website: <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/index.html> under the title Colossal Cave.

```
                Welcome to
                Colossal Cave Adventure!

                Original development by Willie Crowther.
                Major features added by Don Woods.
                Conversion to BDS C by J. R. Jaeger.
                Unix standardization by Jerry D. Pohl.
                Port to QNX 4 and bug fixes by James Lummel.

                Would you like instructions?
                >
```

```
                Conversion to BDS C by J. R. Jaeger.
                Unix standardization by Jerry D. Pohl.
                Port to QNX 4 and bug fixes by James Lummel.

                Would you like instructions?
                >y
                Somewhere nearby is Colossal Cave, where others have found fortunes in
                treasure and gold, though it is rumored that some who enter are never
                seen again. Magic is said to work in the cave. I will be your eyes
                and hands. Direct me with commands of 1 or 2 words. I should warn
                you that I look at only the first five letters of each word, so you'll
                have to enter "Northeast" as "ne" to distinguish it from "North".
                (Should you get stuck, type "help" for some general hints).

                You are inside a building, a well house for a large spring.
                There are some keys on the ground here.
                There is a shiny brass lamp nearby.
                There is tasty food here.
                There is a bottle of water here.
                >
```

Screen shots of the Colossal Cave

An older port of this game by David Stevenson is still available from the Quanta Library, disk GS 03

Sinclair QL USB drives

You'll be the talk of the meet-up with the smallest QL ever from Sandy.



Picture of the QL on a Stick from the Sandy Website

QL On A Stick comes on a stylish, black 2GB USB drive and includes latest versions of all the most popular emulators in one device. This high quality 2GB drive is stylishly etched with the Sinclair QL logo on the front. Sustained read speeds of 25MB and write speeds of 15MB. AA grade flash memory formats to 1,999,294,400 bytes.

Never fear of getting out of date - you can update emulators individually by visiting the authors' sites. This is a brand new version of the QL On A Stick package, featuring various QL emulators for Windows, including QPC, SMSQmulator, QemuLator (shareware version), QLay2 and QL2K.

\$16.60 or approx: £10.25 each.

£2.00 flat rate shipping worldwide.

http://sinclairql.com/store/index.php?route=product/product&path=59&product_id=59

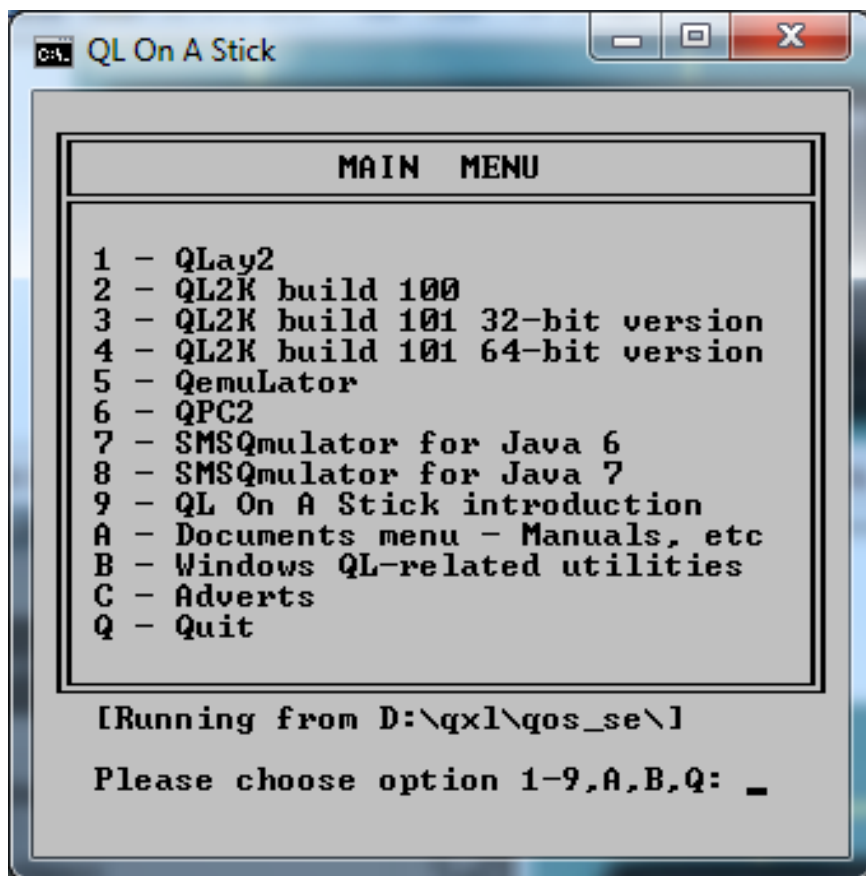
QL On A Stick SE

Released in early April through Quo Vadis Design (on CD) and Sandy (on USB flash memory drive), this is a new and totally reworked version of the popular emulators package.

It has been released to coincide with QPC2 being made freeware, but

there's a whole lot more to it than that. Added to the packages are various Windows-based file transfer packages such as the QXL.WIN Explorer, WXQT2, QXLtool and QLTools and disk imaging programs such as Floopy, Floppy Image and Emt4Win. Incidentally, WXQT2 and QXLWIN Explorer are now available to download from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/files/index.html>

The font end menu is now completely reworked, giving access to many more documentation files, for example, as well as the Windows utility programs.



Screen shot of the main menu - QL on a Stick

Sandy Electronics

Microdrive replacement felt pads 10-pack

Best seller! Over 60 packs shipped!

1+ £2.54 3+ £2.12 5+ £1.76 10+ £1.46 15+ £1.09 20+ £0.85

Coupon "QUANTAPAD" gets QUANTA members 25% off

40LF220 Battery adaptors now shipping £12.00 each

Coupon "QUANTABAT" gets QUANTA members 25% off

Minerva MKII v1.98 - NEW batch

£39.64 no I2C cable £45.60 with I2C cable

Coupon "QUANTAMIN" gets members 10% off

MPlane backplane - NEW batch

£39.75 - "QUANTAMPL" gets members 10% off

QL on a Stick - the best looking QL thumb drive ever made!

2GB, latest versions plus updates, £10.00

Coupon "QUANTA2GB" gets members 10% off

COMING SOON!

We are assembling the last batch of Aurora. Details soon!

Sandy UltimIDE - the most evolved storage interface for the QL!

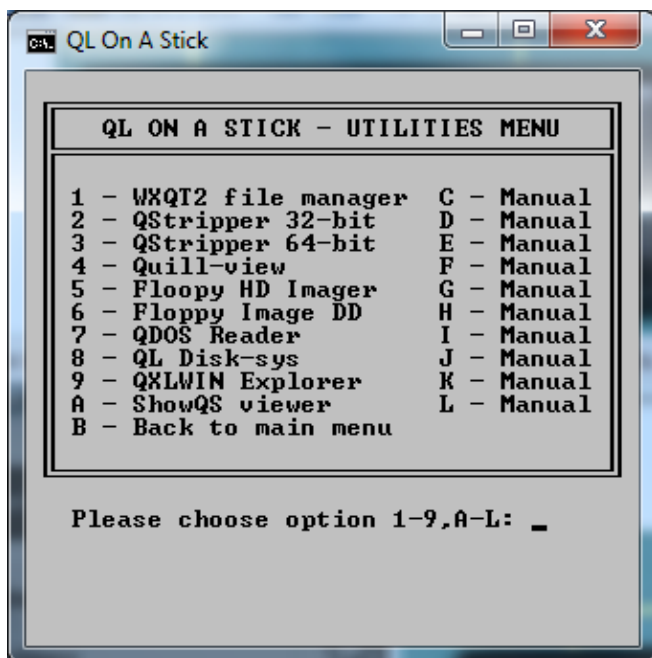
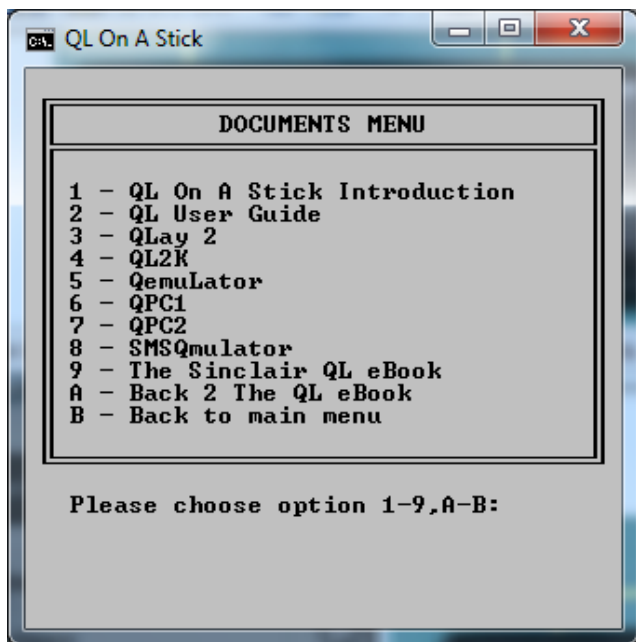
Supports IDE, CompactFlash and onboard SSD!

Shipping for the above items is a flat rate of £2.00

for any size order, anywhere in the World.

For further details contact: sales@SinclairQL.com

<http://www.SinclairQL.com/store/>



More screen shots of the menu systems - QL on a Stick

QL On A Stick SE is available from Quo Vadis Design at : <http://www.qj-gvd.com/> and on a USB pen drive from Sandy at : http://sinclairql.com/store/index.php?route=product/product&path=59&product_id=59

If you'd like to be the proud owner of what is possibly the smallest portable QL ever, you can also get a copy on a 2GB mini-pen drive measuring just 30mm x 12mm (plus a small carry cord – see picture) direct from me at the address inside the front cover for just 5 pounds, but please call to check first as I have only a handful of these mini drives left. I can take Paypal payment, get in touch for the details.



QL On A mini-Stick!

Impact Entertainments QL Software

Rich Mellor writes:

Having tracked down Philip Jones who ran Impact Entertainments with his friend Andrew Cserbakoi, the following items of software have now been released as freeware:

- ◆ Here We Go - a text adventure written in ACT

- ◆ The Gee Gee System - a system to increase your chances when betting on horse races
- ◆ Quizmaster - a Pub Quiz game

I updated Quizmaster to allow you to load in extra sets of questions - this was then sold as Quizmaster II.

I will also release Quizmaster II as freeware.

I can obviously send Quizmaster II including the sources to Dilwyn for the Sinclair QL Homepage. Phil is going to have a look for copies of Here We Go and the original Quizmaster. Hopefully they also have a copy of the Gee Gee system (presuming any of these cartridges still load).

However, if anyone else has copies of these programs on disk - please send them to Dilwyn...

Here We Go! and Quizmaster II are now available to download from the Games page on my website at :

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/index.html>

Sandy Discount Codes For Quanta Members

Don't forget if buying certain products from Dave Park at Sandy that you can still use the 25% off code QUANTABAT and QUANTAPAD on the Gold Card battery replacements and Microdrive felt pads, and 10% off with QUANTAMIN codes if buying a Minerva MkII (either version) published in the News Supplement of the last issue. These special offer codes for members are valid throughout 2014.

QPAC1 and QPAC2 Now Free!

Marcel Kilgus writes:

I have put the latest releases of QPAC1&2 online at:

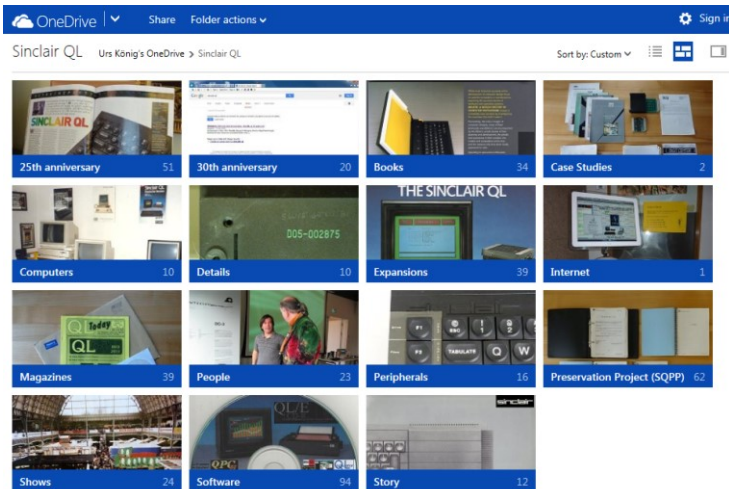
<http://www.kilgus.net/smsgq/qpac2.html>

For the release Jochen provided me with the original disc contents and Text87 manuals for QPAC2, which I converted to PDF using QPCPrint.

QL Picture Gallery

Urs König writes (10th February):

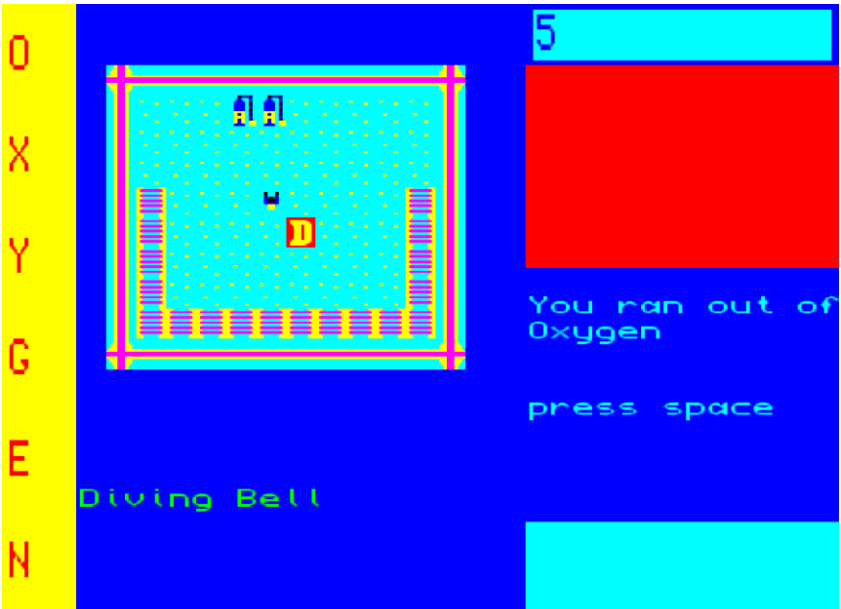
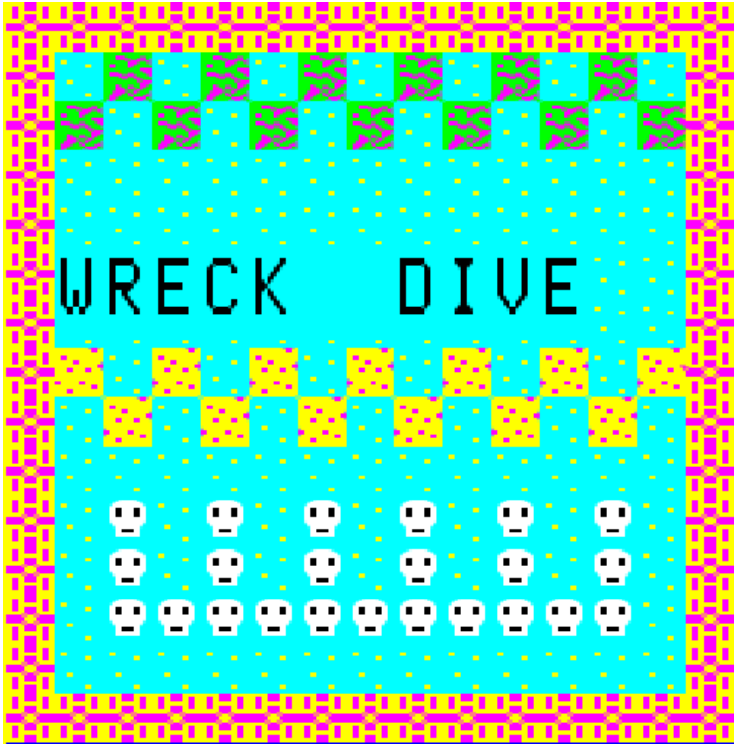
Yesterday the QL Picture Gallery v3.30 - which is also part of QL is 30 2014 The Distribution (see <http://www.qlis30.org.uk>) - has been released and is already available as online web content. The Picture Gallery has grown from 1797 to 1979 pictures with many new exclusive photographs. See <http://tinyurl.com/sqpp25>



Screen shot of the QL Picture Gallery

QL Wreck Dive

Rich Mellor has managed to make contact with former QL software author Nick Ward, who wrote some of the QL titles available from CGH Services and DJC. Nick has given permission for his QL software to be released as freeware, starting with v2.03 of Wreck Dive, featuring a diver exploring a shipwreck in search of treasure. 6 decks and 140 rooms to explore. Other titles may follow when we have been able to locate copies. Download the game from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/index.html>



Screen shots of the Wreck Dive game

Spy and Master Spy Editors

Spy and Master Spy text editors from A.R.K. (Applied Research Kernel), formerly commercial programs, are now available for free download from Editors and Viewers page. Includes a manual for Master Spy, but manual for Spy to follow.

Thanks to various people, I have been able to preserve version 2.4 and 3.0 of Spy, and versions 1.3, 2.1 and 3.3 of MasterSpy. I'm very grateful to Richard Howe of A.R.K. for permission to make these and the manuals and Configuration Parameter Sheets available from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/editview/index.html>

QLTools for HxC

This is a version of qltools modified to operate directly on .hfe files as used by the HxC floppy emulator. It will need the libhxcfe.dll from the http://hxc2001.free.fr/floppy_drive_emulator/index.html this is available by downloading and extracting the HxCFloppyEmulator software. (Graeme Gregory).

Related to the QL Tools for HxC is a DOS batch copy routine by Ian Johnston, to copy files to an SD card image using the Windows exe version of QLTools (command line) with the HxC floppy emulator, .HFE files. Hopefully of use to HxC users, as the QLTools currently has no facility to process batches of files.

The HxC is a floppy disk emulator system, based on an SD card system which plugs into a QL and pretends (as far as the QL is concerned) to be a floppy disk drive, but the files are held in an image file on the SD card. A small screen on the HxC interface lets you choose which image to use. Rich Mellor has provided a simple guide to this device at:

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/manuals/index.html>

These are my comments on ACCURATE LOOPING by Steve Poole in last month's QUANTA. I am always interested in what Steve Poole has to say so I decided to examine his program concerning looping. Before running "Accurate_loops_bas" I made two changes. The first was to line 170.

I set that to

```
170      d2=DATE-d1: PRINT#3
```

instead of

```
170      d2=date_d1: PRINT#3
```

Also I erased the "-1" in line 220 resulting in

```
220      END_FOR loop: d4=DATE-d3
```

I then ran the program with the result

196602 divisions

65534 range

NEW 32766.99 1 secs

OLD 32766.93 1 secs

This shows that the SuperBASIC loop, OLD method, and SCALED_LOOP, NEW method, give different values for the variable

inside the loop. The new method gives the accurate final value of the variable.

This is all due to the inaccuracy of floating point of course. If you set x equal to $32676/.333333333$ and then print x you will get the answer 98301.

However, if you now print $98301-x$ you will get $-6.103516E-5$.

So x was not really equal to 98301 after all!

Just for fun I ran the program with `print_set` to 1. This gave the same results as before, but with a vast amount of intermediate printing to the screen and timings of 14 seconds for NEW and 15 seconds for OLD.

RWAP Software

Replacement QL Keyboard Membranes

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£12 each plus post and packing

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Visit the QL Wiki for more details on software, books and hardware for the Sinclair QL:
www.rwapadventures.com/ql_wiki

RWAP Software
3 Dale View Court, Fulford, Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire ST11 9BA
Tel: 01782 398143
Email: rich@rwapservices.co.uk

UK Cheques payable to 'R. Mellor' or use PayPal.

Website:
www.rwapsoftware.co.uk or www.sellmyretro.com



A cartoon illustration of a man sitting at a desk with a computer. He is looking at the screen, which displays the text 'Added manager on ave 61m'. Above him is a thought bubble containing the text '... skilled manager and saved £1m...'. Below the illustration is the caption: 'Why a bad keyboard membrane could change your whole career strategy!'

Working to safeguard the QL for the future. www.rwapsoftware.co.uk

Steve's method of timing is ingenious in that he waits until the clock has just ticked before setting the start time. This means, though, that the true elapsed time is, on average, 1/2 second longer than the simple difference between end and start values and the true time is between 0 and 1 second longer than that printed. If the start and finish times had been taken simply as DATE, then, on average, the difference between end and start values would be correct but with a bigger variability of +/- 1 second.

I use a different method of timing. This was described in QL Today volume 12 issues 3 and 4. I set a routine into the polling list which simply adds 1 to the value in SYS_VARS + \$DC. By subtracting the value at the beginning of an operation from its value at the end I find the number of 1/50s of a second that have elapsed. (The reason I use that long word in the system variables is that it was the last, and unused, of four long words set aside for saving and restoring floating point registers.)

Using that method gives timings of .4 secs and .14 secs for Steve's 1 sec and 1 sec. For the timing when print_ = 1 I have 13.32 seconds for Steve's 14 and 14.34 for Steve's 15.

It strikes me that, in general, the variable in the loop will be used by programmers not only for its value in calculations but also to determine the number of iterations in the loop. I ran the program with a change which counted the number of iterations. I found that the NEW method gave 196603 iterations whilst the OLD method gave 196604.

I must thank Steve for introducing me to this uncertainty in life of which, up to now, I was fairly blissfully unaware. The trouble which Steve aims to eradicate or at least minimise by SCALED_LOOP is due to the fact that all floating point formats contain approximations.

Since it was Steve Poole who persuaded me to produce a method of doing arithmetic on large numbers I decided to use this method to produce a truly accurate method to replace SCALED_LOOP which is only accurate if the step has less than 9 or 10 decimal places.

The method I use is the same as the SuperBASIC loop. That is, the variable at the start has the step value added successively until the result is equal to or exceeds the final value.

The procedure to do this is given below. By multiplying all numbers by 10^9 I eliminated fractions. Thus, for example, the step of .333333333 became 333333333 and the end point became 3276700000000. I ran this version and got the result

32766.999934466 15.9 secs

The following procedure, which produces the result, is to be added to the program described in QL Today Volume 16 Issues 3 and 4 and Volume 17 Issue 1. (The comments have been placed on a line underneath for clarity Ed.)

```
3210 DEFine PROCedure Sloop
```

```
3215  LOCal lp,t0
```

```
3220  Init 4,5:t0=PEEK_L($280DC)
```

```
    Sets 5 numbers of 4 long words each and sets  
    the time to t0
```

```
3230  Push 3333,0
```

```
    Puts 3333 to number [0]
```

```
3240  Push 100000,1
```

Puts 100000 to number [1]
3250 Mult 0,1,0
Puts [0]*[1] to [0]
3260 Push 33333,1
Puts 33333 to [1]
3270 Add 0,1,0
Puts [0] + [1] to [0]
3280 Push 10,1
Puts 10 to [1]
3290 Power 1,9,1
Puts 10^7 to [1]
3300 Push 32767,2
Puts 32767 to [2]
3310 Mult 2,1,2
Puts [2]* 10^9 to [2]
3320 Dupl 2,1
Copies [2] to [1]
3330 Neg 1
Negates [1]
3340 REPEAT lp

```

3350  Add 1,0,4

      [4] = [1] + [0] (updated loop value)

3360  Subt 4,2,3

      [3] = [4] - [2] (compare with end)

3370  IF Test(3)>=0:EXIT lp

      Finished

3380  Dupl 4,1

      [1] = [4] (update [1])

3390  END REPEAT lp

3395  t0=(PEEK_L($280DC)-t0)/50

      Calculates the number of ticks elapsed

3400  PRINT Decimal$(1)!!t0!!"secs"

      Print the last loop value and time

3405  SUSPEND_TASK 300

3410  END DEFINE

```

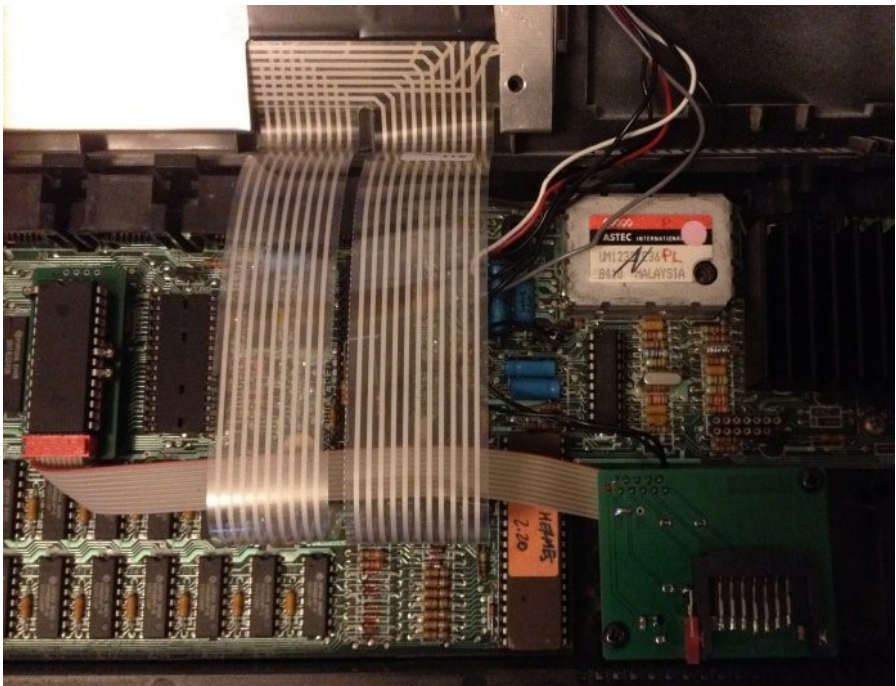
QL-SD INITIAL THOUGHTS

PETER SCOTT

2014 is building up to be a good year for the QL, numerous projects are brewing on the horizon, while a long awaited QL storage puzzle is finally looking to be solved at last by the latest and much sought after arrival. For a long time Qlers could only stare with envy at the specky or BBC scenes (and many others), with

their users enjoying the benefits of flash memory storage expansions.

QL-SD is the first mass storage device based on flash memory cards to make it to the QL market. Designed by Peter Graf and built/sold by Paul Veltjens. QL-SD has been sold initially in small amounts on the Sellmyretro site with a larger scale release to follow. The QL-SD comes with its own SDHC card, but it's worth noting that it only works with SDHC memory cards not the older SD ones.



Picture of SD card in situ

The device itself consists of a Minerva equipped main board which replaces the QL ROM chips, and a small secondary board which replaces one of the Microdrives. Installation was quick and easy, I used my previously QUANTA tinkered white QL that already had both Microdrives removed. It was already equipped with a Minerva ROM, which was then removed and the QL-SD board was lined up and

pushed in to replace it. The machine also benefitted from the fact that it had a new membrane fitted recently. Machines that haven't been opened in a long time will probably need a new membrane fitting at the same time. The secondary board then screws to the Microdrive mounting posts. The SDHC card can be removed/inserted via the same slot as the Microdrive cartridges.



Picture of Peter's albino QL showing the SD card protruding

If all has gone to plan, there will be some exciting new additions on boot up. An SD Card Driver is loaded and the memory card is checked. Just a quick note in that the QL-SD does need a ram expansion to get the best from it, extra memory is needed to map the filing system and for buffering. My QL-SD was used with a 768k trump card.

A new discipline of the QL appeared next with the card using a boot file (I'd never had a storage device worthy enough to make use of

one). With the German heritage of the card, line 140 of the boot file loads the german keyboard driver so I removed that line, having a UK QL with the UK keyboard layout. The QL-SD then works much the same as a Microdrive or floppy disc but sdc1_ is used in place of mdv or flp.



Screen shot of the boot up notification

Having just been introduced to boot files, next up was the use of directories. The main use of my QL at the moment is working with the Adventure Creation Tool. I made a folder for ACT and a working folder for the files that ACT edits to create an adventure. After some tweaking and testing I found that my trump card worked slightly better

as it uses -> to highlight directories, so I removed line 100 from the boot file which loaded a version of TK2 provided with the QL-SD from sdc1 into memory.

The QL-SD has a number of benefits, no need to swap floppies, silent operation and the difference in speed compared to a floppy drive is vast. In a very rough non-scientific test when compiling a test version of a game with ACT from floppy took 9 seconds, the same command using files on sdc1_ took around 2 seconds. A QL_BDI.bin file holds all the QL data on the memory card and this can be backed up with a pc by just copying the file off. The file can also be accessed via Qemulator by using a special BDI driver. The manual is excellent and covers most topics and usage.

QL-SD is a much welcome hardware addition. The QL community has waited a long time for a memory card based storage solution and for me, so far the QL-SD ticks all the boxes, it's hard to imagine going back to using my QL without one. I hope the QL as a whole benefits from it and also that Paul & Peter see the fruits of their hard labour.



Screen shot of the SD directory

It's been a busy couple of months for Sandy. The main event was a 4,212 mile road trip where I drove to San Francisco to visit QL programmer Tim Swenson and collect a careful of QL related hardware, software and a few other odds and ends. Special thanks to Tim, particularly for donating some very useful parts to the UltimIDE project that now do not need to be bought at great expense.

First, I'll update you on progress of products which are available from stock:

The battery adaptors are now shipping. Several have been ordered. What has surprised me is that most of the orders are from QUANTA members, but that they either forgot to or deliberately chose not to use their coupons. Either way, I thank you for that - all those extra funds are going into developing new products. When you look at my ads, the prices listed are retail prices.

If you use the coupon codes published in this magazine (which I take as evidence of being a member) you can get typically 10% to 25% off the various items. This is our way of supporting QUANTA. Coupons will change at the end of the year, so renew those memberships!

Dilwyn Jones has finished updating QL on a Stick, so that is now shipping. I also have stock of the MPlane backplane, freshly assembled.

I am being sent components to assemble the very last batch of 20+ Aurora. This includes new-old-stock logic, circuit boards and parts. I will be providing new parts to replace missing components. These parts are being shipped from abroad, so I honestly have no clue when they will arrive, or how many parts I'll need to source. I will not be taking money before they're assembled, but QUANTA members can join a priority waiting list by emailing sales@SinclairQL.com with the subject "Aurora Waiting List." It will

be strictly first come first served. The agreement on the Aurora is that my share of the proceeds shall be used strictly for new hardware development. As you can imagine, 20+ Aurora will pad the development budget quite nicely.

Now, I will discuss items which are currently in development.

The first project will be new to most of you, because it has happened so quickly. This may happen again with simpler projects where the development time is short and it is based on components I have in stock.

Rich at RWAP and a few others on the QL Forum chatroom were discussing how nice it would be if there were a small, affordable RAM expansion for the new QL-SD interfaces that are starting to reach the market. I considered an internal 512K memory based around an SRAM, which would sit under the 68008 CPU. The catch was that the memory expansion would require access to a signal elsewhere on the QL motherboard. My concern was that opening the case and soldering or clipping a flying lead put installation out of the reach of a large minority of the potential audience. It could have also caused reliability issues.

The alternative of placing the expansion in the expansion port didn't appeal to me because using the expansion port was expensive. The connector - and the increase in the size of the PCB that it required - more than doubled the cost of the memory expansion. Since Rich typically sells 512K RAM expansions for around £35, that meant I would be taking quite a large risk for such a small return.

I was discussing these problems with my partner, and he came up with some imaginative and practical suggestions. He recommended I increased the utility and value of the expansion as much as possible using the smallest range of additional parts.

(More in the next issue—Ed.)

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